

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8207
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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 3123

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG UN LE IS
SUBJ: GUIDELINES FOR A TEMPORARY MODUS VIVENDI IN SOUTH LEBANON

1. RECENT TELEGRAMS FROM TEL AVIV, JERUSALEM AND USUN
SUGGEST A POSSIBLE FRAMEWORK FOR REGULATING UNIFIL'S
RELATIONS WITH FATAH (BUT NOT THE REJECTION FRONT) ON THE
ONE HAND AND WITH THE RIGHTIST MILITIA IN SOUTH LEBANON
ON THE OTHER AFTER THE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL ON JUNE 13.
WHILE THIS FRAMEWORK MIGHT BE ONLY TEMPORARY AND WOULD
SOLVE NONE OF THE BASIC PROBLEMS OF SOUTH LEBANON, IT
MIGHT AT LEAST PREVENT MAJOR VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTH
FOR THE TIME BEING.

2. FATAH'S POSITION.

A. ALTHOUGH WE REMAIN CONVINCED THAT FATAH HAS
NOT AND WILL NOT GIVE UP ITS ARMED PRESENCE IN
SOUTH LEBANON, FATAH ACKNOWLEDGED PUBLICLY THAT IT WILL
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NOT TRY TO INFILTRATE ARMED FIGHTERS THROUGH
UNIFIL LINES TO STRENGTHEN PALESTINIAN FORCES IN THE
SOUTH. IN AN INTERVIEW CARRIED IN THE MAY 29
EDITION OF MONDAY MORNING, FOR EXAMPLE, FATAH
OFFICIAL SALAH KHALAF (ABU IYAD) SAID "INFILTRATION,
WHICH IMPLIES A PROHIBITED ACT, IS NOT NEEDED." HE ADDED

THAT THE PALESTINIANS WANTED ONLY THE RIGHT TO RESUPPLY AND REPLACE MEN IN UNITS ALREADY IN PLACE. IN THIS REGARD, REUTER'S QUOTED A PALESTINIAN SOURCE AS SAYING ON MAY 27 THAT "GUERRILLAS WILL CONTINUE TO CROSS THE UN LINES, BUT ONLY TO RELIEVE MEN IN THE SOUTH WHO RETURN FOR A BREAK FROM TIME TO TIME."

B. FATAH WOULD PROBABLY AGREE NOT TO SEND WEAPONS THROUGH UNIFIL'S LINES. THE PALESTINIAN SOURCE CITED BY REUTER'S ADDED THAT FATAH HAD NO NEED TO TRANSPORT WEAPONS SOUTH, SINCE "THERE ARE SUFFICIENT QUANTITIES OF HEAVY WEAPONS AS WELL AS LIGHT PORTABLE ARMS HIDDEN IN THE SOUTH." FATAH WOULD, HOWEVER, PROBABLY TRY TO SEND AMMUNITION SOUTH, REGARDLESS OF ANY COMMITMENTS IT MADE.

C. ON THE OTHER HAND, FATAH WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY NOT AGREE TO STOP RESUPPLYING UNITS IN PLACE WITH NON-MILITARY ITEMS. MOREOVER, ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCES, FATAH HAS MADE NO SUCH COMMITMENT TO UN OFFICIALS WHILE THE LATTER WERE IN BEIRUT.

D. FATAH HAS INDICATED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THAT IT IS WILLING TO CONTINUE TO FOREGO CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONS AGAINST ISRAEL FOR THE TIME BEING. ABU IYAD TOLD MONDAY MORNING "WE WILL NOT TAKE ACTION ACROSS THE LEBANESE BORDER, BECAUSE THAT WOULD CAUSE PROBLEMS."
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3. REJECTIONIST POSITION. IN CONTRAST TO FATAH, THE PFLP AND ITS PALESTINIAN AND LEBANESE ALLIES HAVE EMPHASIZED PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY THAT THEY WILL ACCEPT NO LIMITATION ON THEIR MOVEMENTS, LOGISTICAL ACTIVITIES OR MILITARY OPERATIONS.

4. RIGHTIST POSITION. WE HAVE MUCH LESS EVIDENCE ON THE RIGHTIST AS OPPOSED TO THE PALESTINIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD UNIFIL. THE RIGHTISTS WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY NOT BE WILLING TO CLOSE THE "GOOD FENCE." NEVERTHELESS, AS REPORTED JERUSALEM 1468, EITAN SEEMS TO SUGGEST THE RIGHTISTS WOULD ACCEPT SOME UN PRESENCE AND WOULD NOT SEEK ARMED CONFRONTATION WITH UNIFIL. THUS, THERE MAY BE SOME BASIS FOR A UNIFIL-RIGHTIST AGREEMENT WHICH THE PALESTINIANS COULD ACCEPT.

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5. RELATIONSHIP OF PALESTINIAN ATTITUDE TO RIGHTIST ROLE.

WE AGREED WITH PARA 2, USUN 2157, THAT ONLY GOL CAN DETERMINE WHICH FORCES CAN BE IN SOUTH LEBANON. UNTIL THE GOL DOES SO, HOWEVER, AND UNLESS IT SHOULD INDICATE THAT HADDAD'S FORCES ARE PART OF THE LEGITIMATE LEBANESE ARMY, ANY FRAMEWORK FOR A MODUS VIVENDI IN SOUTH LEBANON WILL HAVE TO INCLUDE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF UNIFIL POSITIONS WITHIN AREAS NOW CONTROLLED BY CHRISTIAN MILITIA, IF PALESTINIAN COOPERATION IS TO BE SECURED. PALESTINIANS IN THEIR DISCUSSIONS WITH GUYER HERE EMPHASIZED THAT AFTER COMPLETE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, UNIFIL MUST TREAT CHRISTIAN MILITIA AS IT DOES PALESTINIAN MILITIA. THUS, THE PALESTINIANS AS WELL AS THE SYRIANS (SEE DAMASCUS 2953) ARE CERTAIN TO REJECT ISRAELI PROPOSALS (SEE JERUSALEM 1468) THAT UNIFIL RESTRICT ITS PRESENCE IN CHRISTIAN AREAS TO FIVE UNTSO POSTS.

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6. GIVEN WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE ATTITUDES OF THE PALESTINIANS AND CHRISTIANS, SOME POSSIBLE GUIDELINES FOR RELATIONS WITH UNIFIL ARE GIVEN BELOW.

7. POSSIBLE GUIDELINES FOR UNIFIL/PLO RELATIONS.

IN EXCHANGE FOR ACCEPTANCE OF THEIR ARMED PRESENCE IN SOUTH LEBANON AND OF THE RESUPPLY WITH NON-MILITARY ITEMS OF THOSE UNITS NOW IN PLACE IN SOUTH LEBANON, FATAH MIGHT AGREE:

--NOT TO INFILTRATE ANY MORE ARMED MEN INTO SOUTH LEBANON. (IN FACT, UNARMED PALESTINIANS WOULD CONTINUE TO MOVE SOUTH AND PICK UP WEAPONS THERE.)

--TO CONFINE THEIR MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE SOUTH AND THE ARQUB TO THOSE NUMBERS AND LOCATIONS PROVIDED FOR IN THE CAIRO/MELKART/SHTAURA AGREEMENT, OR SOME NEW, SIMILAR AGREEMENT TO BE WORKED OUT WITH THE GOL.

--TO CONTINUE TO REFRAIN FROM CROSS BORDER OPERATIONS AGAINST ISRAEL, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING.

8. POSSIBLE GUIDELINES FOR UNIFIL/CHRISTIAN RELATIONS.

IN RETURN FOR ACCEPTANCE (IMPLIED OR STATED) OF THE GOOD FENCE AND THE RIGHT TO KEEP THEIR ARMS, THE CHRISTIANS MIGHT AGREE TO:

--ALLOW UNIFIL UNITS TO ESTABLISH AN ARMED PRESENCE IN MOST OF THEIR AREA OF CONTROL;

--ACCEPT UNIFIL'S PRESENCE AND FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT
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IN ALL OTHER AREAS.

9. SOME CAVEATS.

A. ALTHOUGH THE GUIDELINES INDICATED ABOVE DO NOT REPRESENT A PERMANENT SOLUTION FOR SOUTH LEBANON, THEY MAY FORM A POSSIBLE BASIS FOR A MODUS VIVENDI FOR THE CRITICAL PERIOD AROUND JUNE 13. IN PART, THIS IS BECAUSE OF A CERTAIN SYMMETRY BETWEEN THE FATAH AND CHRISTIAN MILITIA POSITIONS:

--FATAH MAY BE WILLING TO RESTRAIN ITS ACTIVITIES AND THE SIZE OF ITS PRESENCE IN SOUTH LEBANON TO AVOID EXACERBATING ITS RELATIONS WITH THE LEBANESE MUSLIMS AND UNIFIL AND TO AVOID GIVING THE ISRAELIS A PRETEXT FOR REMAINING IN SOUTH LEBANON. WE DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT FATAH IS WILLING TO ABANDON TOTALLY AN ARMED PRESENCE IN SOUTH LEBANON.

--SIMILARLY, THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA MAY BE

WILLING TO RESTRAIN THEIR ACTIVITIES AND PRESENCE IN ORDER TO AVOID EXACERBATING RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE GOL. BUT THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE UNWILLING TO COMPROMISE THEIR POTENTIAL TO CONTROL AREAS WHERE THEY NOW PREDOMINATE. (WE ALSO DOUBT THE ISRAELIS WOULD ALLOW THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA TO COMPROMISE THEIR ABILITY TO ACT AS A SECURITY BELT FOR ISRAEL.)

B. AS OPPOSED TO BOTH FATAH AND CHRISTIANS, THE REJECTION FRONT WILL CERTAINLY REJECT ANY ARRANGEMENTS CALLING FOR LIMITATIONS ON ITS MOVEMENTS OR COMBAT OPERATIONS. WHILE FATAH MAY EXERCISE SOME RESTRAINT ON THE REJECTIONISTS, IT WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE UNABLE TO COMPLETELY CONTROL THEM.

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C. NO SOLUTION, NOT EVEN A TEMPORARY ONE, IS POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE COOPERATION ALSO OF THE ISRAELIS, WHO STRONGLY INFLUENCE IF NOT CONTROL THE CHRISTIAN FIGHTERS IN THE SOUTH.
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